THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Various States/UT Governments have set up 264 Government Women ITIs, 95 Private Women ITCs, 685 Women Wings in Government ITIs and 108 Women Wings in Private ITCs having a total of 49,336 training seats.

In addition, Ministry of Labour & Employment has set up 1 National and 10 Regional Vocational Training Institutes for women in different States.

(c) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government of India.

There are already 12 Government ITIs, 12 Private ITCs for women and 3 women training wings in general ITIs in Tamil Nadu. Apart from this, 30% seats are also reserved for women in general ITIs/ITCs in Tamil Nadu. The total seating capacity in women ITls/wings is 2568.

The existing seats reserved for women in Tamil Nadu are not fully utilized and, therefore, Government ofTamil Nadu does not have any proposal to set up a new women training institute.

Does not arise.

Closing down of weaver cooperative societies in A.P.

*295. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that 390 weaver cooperative societies out of a total 1412 societies in the State of Andhra Pradesh have closed down recently because of the loan and interest burden on the weavers;

if so, whether any relief measures are taken up for implementation to help the weaver cooperative societies to come out of distress;

if so, the details thereof;

how much of the outstanding loan and interest, which is to the tune of Rs. 52 crore in the State, would be waived; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) According to the information provided by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh, it is not correct that 390 weavers cooperatives societies out of a total 1412 societies in the State of Andhra Pradesh have closed down recently because of the loan and interest burden on the weavers.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) A committee headed by Managing Director, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was formed by this Ministry to look into the problems of high cost of working capital and choking of credit lines in the handloom sector. The committee prepared a Financial Package in this regard whose proposals *inter-alia-inc\ude;*

i. Cleansing of the balance sheet of Apex and Primary Weavers Cooperative Socieities (Viable and potentially viable) with adequate fund support from Government.

ii. Waiver of overdue interest and overdue loans of weavers/PWCSs/Apex Societies as on 31st March, 2006.

The total financial implication of the financial package is estimated to be Rs. 1295 Crores, which includes financial assistance required for weaver cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh.

The above proposals are under consideration of the Government.

Opposition to extension of visa to Ms. Tasleema

†*296. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

SHRI SHREEGOPAL WAS: Will the Minister of

HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that some people are opposing extension of visa to Ms. Tasleema;

whether she has asked for refuge;

whether her novel 'Lajja' is the cause behind it;

whether her health is a matter of concern; and

whether some specific measures are being taken to keep her mentally fit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRI PRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (e) Ms. Taslima Nasrin, an author of Bangladesh origin, is a citizen of Sweden, holding a Swedish passport. She came to India on 25.01.2006 and her visa for stay in India has been extended from time to time. The last extension of visa has been granted to her for six months upto 17.08.2008.

Ms. Nasrin has been a subject of controversy on account of her writings, including the novel "Lajja". Some organisations have, opposed the grant of extension of visa to Ms. Taslima Nasrin. Ms. Taslima Nasrin has been provided with appropriate medical treatment and facilities, as and when required.

Leakage of funds meant for rural development

*297. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

whether Government is aware that process of releasing funds for rural development is cumbersome, since first it goes to State capitals wherefrom it goes to district headquarters and in the process lots of leakages of funds do take place; and

if so, the details of steps Governments is taking to plug the leakages?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. At present about 90% of funds under various programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development are released directly to District Rural Development Agencies, District Water and Sanitation Missions and to the State Rural Road Development Agencies (SRRDAs). The SRRDAs are autonomous bodies. As such there is no scope for delay or leakage of funds.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.